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Reasons for Spreading Unitarianism.

The progress of Unitarian Christianity in our country leaves to those of its friends who take an enlarged view of the subject no reason to despond. On the contrary, when we call to mind that men now living can remember the day when the first Unitarian congregations in the United States were gathered, and then look at the number now calling themselves by our name, and the still larger number who hold the greater part of our doctrines, our first feeling should be of surprise at the rapidity with which our views have spread themselves.

But hitherto the progress of Unitarianism has owed little to the zeal of its friends. The majority of them have adhered most rigorously to the mistaken principle of letting the truth work its own way, and, if we except the labours of the Unitarian Association, which have necessarily been very limited, the few exertions which have been made to spread our faith have been confined to individuals and carried on in a desultory way. The fate of what we believe to be Christian truth has been left to the operation of accidental causes, while we have sat quietly with our hands folded. We think that this is not as it ought to be; that we, as Unitarians, are not acting the part of philanthropists or of Christians; that so long as we remain in idleness we remain in sin. We should be up and doing.

We feel desirous of presenting to others the considerations which have brought us to this opinion; and the more so because we have ourselves been but lately led to feel their force,

and think that they have been candidly examined by very few.

In the first place, we are bound to make our religious opinions known because we are persuaded of their *truth.*

Whatever argument can be brought for giving alms to the needy can be urged with double force for making efforts to impart the truth we possess to others. This is so, to some extent, of all truth, but above all of religious truth, because of its transcendent importance and its necessary connexion with men's daily conduct. What should we think of the man who invented the plough, if he had failed to make it known to others? Yet this case is trifling, when compared with negligence in making known truth which is important to the soul. If we have no right to withhold from our fellow-men what would make their outward condition more prosperous, it is inexcusable in us to keep back that which would elevate and purify their spiritual nature. Truth is a trust from God, as much so as money or talents; and we are equally responsible to God for the manner in which we use it. We have no business to bury it in a napkin, or hide it under a bushel; it is our duty to set it where it will enlighten all men. "That would all be very well," some one may say, "if we could be sure that *we* alone have the truth; but, in fact others are as likely to be right as we." True; we do not pretend to infallibility, and therefore should not endeavour to *force* our opinions on others. But if, as we profess, we have arrived, after laborious investigation, at the firm conclusion that there are great errors in the prevalent theology, and that we have succeeded in finding a purer system, which is more consonant with Scripture, it is not the less our duty to *make known* the results of our labour. What we believe to be true *is* truth to us, and has all the claims of truth upon us. We may quiet our consciences by saying that others have the Scriptures as well as we, and may examine them with as good a chance of success; but so long as we think that their researches have been less fortunate or less impartial than ours, or that they have not been made at all, we cannot get rid of our duty to impart to them our advantages and discoveries. This argument, though very old and much slighted, seems to us unanswerable. Like every other argument, however, it can be evaded. "We do not deny the force of your reasoning," it may be answered, "we feel the value of truth and would gladly do anything to promote its diffusion.

But, after all, we think it better to let truth work its own way. It will prevail at last."

It is very hard to give patient attention to such sophistry as this; yet it is thrown in our teeth every day. We shall not put ourselves out, however, to answer it, for we are satisfied that it is only an excuse for determined laziness, and if it were removed, something equally ridiculous would be found to take its place. Besides, we think that it is generally used only by those who are not themselves fully "persuaded in their own minds" as to their religious opinions. To such persons we do not speak; we exhort them to seek diligently after the truth, till they feel sure that they have found it; but until then, perhaps, it would be well that they should not attempt to teach others. We are confident that no one who feels the power of truth can rest in these or the like cold speculations. How would such an argument have sounded in the mouths of the apostles? Did they leave truth to take care of itself? Their lives spent in preaching it abroad are a sufficient answer to the question. No. They knew, and every sensible man knows, that if all men are left to struggle through the tedious process of finding truth for themselves, truth will make but slow and uncertain progress; that it is a rare thing for an individual, if unaided and undirected, to throw off the shackles of long-received error; and to expect a whole community to do so would be little better than madness. The course of God's providence in this respect is very plain; he reveals the truth to a few, and leaves it with them to declare it to the world. Let us, therefore, who think that we have found the truth *make it known* to all men. Whether or not it will *at last* prevail is not the question that most nearly concerns us. It is in our power to hasten or to retard its progress, and there is no work half so glorious as that of hastening it.

Shall we, then, become a proselyting sect? In the popular sense, by no means. But why should a prejudice, arising from the existence of improper methods of spreading opinion, tie our hands from Christian exertion? It is not that we may make proselytes to our name, to swell the number of our churches at the expense of others, that we would labour; God forbid that any Christian should work from such unworthy motives. Our aim is higher. We are convinced that error is always hurtful; and although multitudes of every sect and name may have risen above the clouds of false theology, so as to become examples to the world, we fear that where false creeds prevail the most pernicious influences are exerted

on the mass of believers, and that such influences have a constant tendency to increase; and therefore we think that, in the prospect of making our fellow-men safer and happier and better, we have abundant reason to exert ourselves to the utmost. If anyone think that Christianity would not have greater efficacy if our views of it were to prevail, we do not ask *him* to diffuse them; but we do ask him and require of him not to reproach with a *proselyting spirit* those who feel the beauty and power of our religion, and whose "hearts' desire and prayer is" that it may be universal.

We feel that, if there were no more to be said, our case would be a strong one. If it were only with the errors in Christian theology that we are called to contend, we have motives enough for exertion. But, unfortunately, these are our least dangerous opponents. It is for the removal of skepticism and infidelity that we must summon all our energies.

The alarming extent of skepticism is, therefore, the second reason that we offer why we should strive to spread our religious opinions.

"In skepticism," says Goethe, "there is no good thing." All Christians can respond to the sentiment. There is no peace, no improvement, no elevation, no happiness; but harassing inquietude, desolation, and despair. Whatever is unfruitful and lone and dreary, that is an emblem of skepticism. Woe is to the soul to which the food of faith is denied, the bread of heaven which alone gives life and strength and immortality. Most earnestly do we call, therefore, upon every man who pretends to value his religion as the source of excellence and happiness, here and hereafter, to do something in behalf of the multitudes who, from whatever cause, have made shipwreck of their faith, and to whom the hope of eternity is becoming daily more faint and the sanctions of morality daily more weak; to *do* something, or at least to attempt something. We appeal to Unitarians, whether they are not bound, as those who love God, as philanthropists, as Christians, *in common with all other Christians*, to use their strength, whatever it may be, to extirpate skepticism from our land. Let the conscience of every one of us answer. Meanwhile, let it be kept in mind that the obligation to engage in this holy cause, if it exists at all, involves the duty of being diligent in extending the knowledge of *our own views* of Christianity; for we certainly cannot doubt that Unitarianism is at least as efficient as other systems in combatting the

foes of religion — and, at all events, we cannot labour to spread what we do not believe to be true.

But there is a more important view of this part of our subject, to which we now hasten. It has of late become very common among Liberal Christians to ascribe the growth of skepticism to the prevalence of false views of theology. If this charge can be sustained, it places them under peculiar obligations. We believe that it *can* be sustained, both in theory and by facts. Let us not be understood to call in question the power of Christianity, in any of its forms, upon the souls of those who adopt them. So far from it, we believe that the essential truths of our religion are included in the creed of almost every sect of Christians. They are indeed sometimes very much obscured; but where the principle of faith is not wanting, they cannot fail to find their way to the heart, to purify and elevate it. Nor do we say that skepticism is in such a sense the offspring of false theology that none are safe from it but those whose creeds are entirely free from error. But we do say, because we believe, that if none but correct views of our divine religion had ever prevailed in the world, the time would never have come when the doubters of revealed truth would have been so numerous as at present. If in our own country the doctrines which have been generally taught from Christian pulpits, had contained nothing but Christian truth, so many would never have revolted from them in disgust. Men must be deceived before they will prefer stones to bread. Notwithstanding the degrading influences of a false philosophy, by which society, from its highest to its lowest member, has been pervaded, and which has taught them to doubt everything not vouched for by their senses, — we believe that if the choice had been between true and rational religion or none, the soul would have vindicated its dignity. Men may rush from superstition and error to unbelief, but not from plain and intelligible truth; for faith is more natural to the soul, as well as more happy, than skepticism. The causes of the skepticism of the present day are various; but, whatever they are assumed to be, they would have been comparatively powerless, if everywhere opposed by simple, uncorrupted Christianity.

The manner in which the prevalence of false theology may give rise to skepticism is very plain. For a long time great errors may exist and be comparatively harmless; but when a spirit of inquiry is strongly excited, and men resolve to receive nothing upon authority, great changes must take place;

and very many will be found who, previously disposed to irreligion, inquire only so far as to see the falsehood of their old creeds, and, without taking the pains to cull out the truth, are willing to reject the whole system on which they were founded. The skeptics and infidels of our country are such men as these. They were, probably, never *religious* men, and only needed to see the erroneousness and irrationality of the prevalent systems of religion in order to reject Christianity itself as a superstition. We do not say, therefore, that the prevalent theology is the only cause of skepticism, but that it has given and is now giving other causes full opportunity to operate. Perhaps we might go further, but this is enough for our present purpose. And our argument is this: That if skepticism has arisen to its present dreadful height because of the insufficiency of the generally received views of Christianity to meet the spirit of inquiry which has pervaded the land, the *remedy* for the evil, and the barrier to its further progress, must be looked for in the diffusion of a simple and more rational faith. Religion must be so set forth that it can meet inquiry, or skepticism must remain and increase. It is in vain to hope that men will return to that very creed, the inconsistencies of which first made them doubt the truth of all religion. It is hard enough to bring them back by any means to a religious life; if done at all, it must be by showing them religion in a new and better aspect. Let wise men be sent to them, who will treat them like fellow-men, not beginning with denunciations because they do not receive as true what they regard as incredible; but who, in the spirit of love, inviting them to examine for themselves, shall unfold a faith which their reason will approve, and which seems worthy of a revelation from God; and then, and not till then, may we hope for their conversion.

Under what a great responsibility does this view place us, as liberal and rational Christians! If it is true that skepticism, the worst of human evils, is the consequence of the errors of the prevalent theology, and therefore cannot be removed or checked by it, and at the same time we profess to have redeemed Christianity from the envelopes which time and ill-directed zeal have thrown around it, we are surely culpable to a fearful degree in remaining so long inactive.

But it is retorted upon us when we hold this argument, "Where is the *proof* of the superior power of Unitarianism in removing skepticism and infidelity? We do not see that it is more mighty than other systems of Christianity in pulling

down the strong-holds of irreligion." There is much unfairness in the manner in which this retort is often made upon Unitarians. The causes which have produced skepticism have been long in action, and the evil is now deeply seated and peculiarly virulent in its character, — Christianity has become so identified with the creeds which have borne its name that it is extremely difficult to obtain anything like a fair hearing for it, — false principles of interpreting the Bible remain among those who no longer regard it as a revelation, and are a great obstacle to their being brought to a fair examination of its doctrines, — and other difficulties of the same sort exist in the way of Unitarians, — yet they are gravely called upon to show the superiority of their system, by producing crowds of those whom it has reclaimed from infidelity — and this, too, when every possible means is used by those who make the demand to obstruct and discourage us.

But we pass by this. We *can* point to many, to very many, who have been reclaimed from infidelity, and more who have been *saved* from it, by Unitarianism. Let these be our answer to those who ridicule our pretensions. When we have had more time to act, and more freedom of action, we trust, by the help of God, to be able to make a yet more triumphant reply.

But we should do ourselves great injustice if we rested the strength of our cause upon the number of reclaimed infidels that we can point to. The effect of Unitarianism in its direct and apparent influence upon skepticism is not so great as in its intermediate and preventive power. We wish to illustrate this, as it is very important.

If Unitarianism were widely promulgated in the west (where the prevalence of skepticism is well known), so as to come to the ears of almost every man, we should not expect the result to be seen in the immediate conversion of multitudes of unbelievers. The majority of those who have become confirmed in unbelief would probably remain infidels. The fire has gone out, and nothing but ashes remains. Yet even from these a few might be reclaimed; and, as in the temperance reform, confirmed drunkards have been thought beyond the reach of good influences, yet many even of these have been saved, so might it be with us. A few perishing souls might be snatched from the jaws of destruction; a spark might be found under the ashes which would yet kindle into light and heat. With less determined skeptics we should hope for more success. They have not yet become

easy in their state, but are willing enough to believe religion true if they can be persuaded that it is rational; they doubt Christianity more because they do not like its doctrines than because they prefer skepticism. They are yet within the reach of reason and reform. The principal difficulties would be to get their attention, and to prove to them that the Bible teaches nothing absurd or irrational. There are *many* skeptics of this class, both in the west and in Virginia and the states further south, whom we should confidently hope to make Christians. They might not call themselves Unitarians, but they would believe in Christ, which is the great object.

So much for the more direct and remedial influence. The indirect and preventive we should expect to be very much greater. There are, at this moment, thousands on the point of skepticism, who yet number themselves among Christians. If such persons continue to hear nothing but those doctrines which they have been accustomed to, and which have lost their influence over them, they will pass from uncertainty to indifference, to skepticism, to infidelity. But if other and simpler doctrines are preached to them, there is good ground for hope that they will either openly embrace them (which, however, is not the probable course), or will silently modify their creed according to them and remain under the denominations which have become endeared by early associations. In this way, a great deal would be done in checking the growth of the evil, by saving many from skepticism before they have tasted its bitterness. Once more, — we should expect still greater influence to be exerted by Unitarianism, *intermediately*, by modifying the opinions of the teachers of religion in other denominations, so that the prevalent theology, though using the old creeds, should become more liberal and rational. The objectionable tenets would be less and less insisted upon, (we mean of course after the first fever of controversy is allayed,) and would be practically lost sight of; and thus one of the great causes of skepticism would be removed. The influence of our views in this indirect and intermediate way we believe to have been already very great; and as our object is, not to increase a sect, but to make men religious, an influence exerted so quietly and peacefully should be peculiarly grateful to us. That it is real no one will doubt who has witnessed the change in the tone and character of preaching which follows the establishment of Unitarian congregations in cities where they have not before existed. It is

in this way, indeed, that our greatest influence has been felt and must continue to be felt; — it is indirect, unacknowledged, but powerful and happy. The only misfortune is, that few are willing to labour in a cause where the result of their efforts is not tangible and before everybody's eyes.

These are the several ways in which we should expect good results to flow from the extensive propagation of Unitarian views of Christianity, in removing and preventing skepticism. If a tenth part of what we have said be true we have every encouragement to engage actively in this work. With the prospect of saving the souls of men we should not remain doubtful or idle. Let us, therefore, send Unitarianism through the west and south; we need not fear but that it will be received by many of the present generation, and by multitudes of the rising one. Let us make a fair beginning, so that in every state of the Union it shall be known what Unitarianism is, and then we may hope for its spread. At the present time the knowledge of our views is very limited and imperfect; in many places where our name has been heard the most false notions are prevalent of our belief and character. In some places we are considered as no better than infidels, and it may be that we are thus unconsciously furnishing an example of unbelief. Are we not bound to impart a more full knowledge of our doctrines, lest the hearsay of them may be doing mischief? And again, are not we, who have done so much to spread that spirit of inquiry by which many have been led to the most fatal mistakes, bound to do much also to lead them to the knowledge of the infinite value of religion, by offering to them our Divine faith in a form in which they can receive it? On whatever side we look we see new grounds of obligation to labour strenuously in diffusing our views of Christian truth. "But how shall men believe in what they have not heard? or how shall they hear except they have preachers? or how shall they preach except they be sent?" Let preachers, therefore, be sent to all parts of our country, till the voice of Unitarianism has reached all ears. We have been long enough deterred by the danger of sectarianism. We had better be sectarians than cold and unfeeling; we had better be too earnest to make men Unitarians than not to care to make them Christians.

W. G. E.

Review of the Supposed Danger of Hoping to be Saved on the Ground of Obedience to the Gospel.

It has long been fashionable to speak of good works or gospel obedience as worthless in regard to justification in the sight of God. Not only so, men have been taught that it is very dangerous to hope that anything they do or can do will be of any avail in respect to the pardon of sin or Divine approbation. They are told that "the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of the sinner's justification." At the same time it is admitted that Christians should be "careful to maintain good works," which they are to regard as evidence that they are in a justified state, and not as anything on account of which God will pardon, accept, or approve them.

The manner in which this subject has been treated must, it seems to me, have occasioned great confusion and perplexity in the minds of many Christians. Here I may ask, Why are we to regard faith, repentance, and their proper fruits or works, as evidence of a justified state? Is it not because God has required those duties, assuring us that they are pleasing in his sight, that he will accept them and count them for righteousness? If such be the fact, why should we allow ourselves to speak contemptuously of what God requires and approves? Let us examine the question in view of the language of God to the guilty sons of men.

In the Old Testament we find God saying: "But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, *he shall live thereby*;" — "*in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.*" In the New Testament sinners are thus addressed: "Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, *that your sins may be blotted out.*" In the passage from the Old Testament we have a condition stated, by a compliance with which the sinner shall live; and we are informed that this compliance with the condition is counted by God for righteousness — "in his righteousnes that he hath done he shall live." In the passage from the New Testament the duty of repentance is enjoined and the sinners are told that they should repent and be converted that their sins may be blotted out. Suppose that one man regards his compliance with the conditions or duties as evidence that he is in a justified state; another considers his compliance as the condition or ground on which God has promised to forgive and accept the reformed sinner. What is the essential differ-

ence in the two cases, that one of the persons should be approved and the other rejected? In each case the primary ground of reliance is the mercy of God, which has revealed such gracious conditions of pardon and salvation. We see nothing in either view of the matter which can be offensive to God. Indeed, we can see no reason for regarding gospel obedience as evidence of a justified state, except the promise of God that he will pardon and save those who obey the gospel. Is it not then a truth, that gospel obedience is evidence of a justified state because it is the revealed condition of justification? — *Ezek.* xxxiii. 19. xviii. 22. *Acts* iii. 19.

The believer in Jesus is not justified as one who never sinned; but as a *reformed sinner* — one who has turned from the evil of his ways by obedience to the gospel. What, then, has the righteousness of Christ to do with this justification? Surely we are not accounted righteous merely on the ground that Christ is righteous; but because we have so believed in him as to take up the cross and follow him — in other words, because our faith in Christ works by love, purifies the heart, and disposes us to walk as he walked. His righteousness is the ground of our belief in his testimony respecting God's love to the world, his readiness to pardon the penitent, and that obedience which God is disposed to count for righteousness. Had we no evidence of the righteousness of Christ we should have no proper ground for faith in his testimony as the Messiah. While the righteousness of Christ affords ample ground for faith in his testimony, we can see no reason why we should be accounted righteous because he is righteous, without any regard to our personal obedience. But if God has graciously assured us by his Son that the penitent shall be pardoned, and that he will count that faith for righteousness which worketh by love and purifieth the heart, we can see it to be reasonable to hope in his mercy and faithfulness, that he will accept and reward the righteousness which he requires of us. To suppose that God accounts the believer righteous only for the righteousness of Christ, without respect to the righteousness or obedience which he has required of us and which has been performed in humble reliance on his promises, is to suppose that he acts in an arbitrary manner, and accounts us righteous for obedience performed by another person.

In objecting to the Calvinistic views of imputed righteousness Dr. Smalley very justly observed, — "*Merit* and *de-*

merit are things not to be acquired or lost by proxy. The *consequences* of the good or evil of one person's actions may devolve on another, — not the *righteousness* or *criminality* of them." In the same connexion, speaking of Christ, the Doctor says, — "His *righteousness* is not transferred to us; only the *benefits* of it." It may, then, here be asked, How do we become partakers of the "benefits" of Christ's righteousness? Does God accept and reward us on account of Christ's righteousness, disregarding our obedience to him? Surely not. We are benefited by his righteousness when by faith in it we credit his testimony, obey his precepts, imitate his example, and thus comply with the conditions of pardon and eternal life which he proclaimed. We have seen that of the reformed sinner God says, — "In his righteousness that he hath done he shall live." But where has he said, In the righteousness Christ hath done the sinner shall live? I know not.

Those who suppose that "the righteousness of Christ is the only ground of the sinner's justification" seem to imagine that this is the only way in which justification can be of "free grace." But was it not wholly of free grace that God so loved the world that he sent his only Son to be our Saviour? Was it not of free grace that he gave us assurance that the penitent shall be forgiven, and that he will count faith for righteousness? If his promises to penitent sinners are of free grace, so must the fulfilment of them be. On the hypothesis which I have supposed to be true, every step in our salvation is of free grace. But where shall we look for free grace in an exemption from punishment *purchased* by the infinite suffering of an innocent and holy Being, on whom God laid "the punishment due to us all?" After the penalty due to offences has been inflicted, what remains to be forgiven?

NOAH WORCESTER.

Workingmen's Library, Vol. I. Boston, L. C. Bowles, 1833.

WE have introduced this work, published under the auspices of the Middlesex County Lyceum, not to pass any judgment upon its merits, but because it gives us an occasion to devote a few pages to the Workingmen, for whose especial benefit it is designed.

We have long since taught ourselves to sympathize with human nature wherever we meet it, in its humblest as well as in its proudest manifestations. In the lowest and most abandoned of our race we have learned to recognise a brother for whom Christ died — a mind possessing all the elements of intellectual greatness — an immortal soul capable of a generous and sublime virtue, capable of approaching the Deity himself by a kindred excellence. We must, therefore, view with deep interest whatever affects for good or for evil any portion of our fellow-beings; and we do most heartily rejoice at every effort made by the too long neglected workingmen, or for them, to meliorate their condition and to give them their just influence in society. And in this we are not alone. All who are conscious that their own lot is bound up with that of the human race do and must sympathize with us.

The workingman is beginning to attract no little attention. Already, in some places, he assumes a degree of importance which the most sanguine of his friends in former times would not have dared to predict. Many, of a class who once ranked him with the ox that aided his labours, now admit that he is a human being, and suspect that he has the common rights of man. He himself becomes conscious that he has not always been true to himself. The thrilling words, "God has created all men with equal rights," have reached his ears and penetrated his heart. He resolves to raise himself to an equality with those he long considered his superiors. This is what should have been expected, from the new impulse given to the human mind by the revival of letters, the invention of the art of printing, and that important — more important than commonly suspected — revolution which, by common consent, is called The Reformation. That impulse has descended from the higher classes to the lower, from the learned to the ignorant. Knowledge has been wrested from the class which formerly monopolized it, and is now diffusing some of its omnipotence among the people. An intellectual day dawns on "the millions." True, the many, as yet, "see men only as trees walking"; but to be able to see thus much proves that no little of their former blindness has been removed, and bids us hope that another washing "in the pool of Siloam" will give them perfect vision. True, also, they know not yet what they would have. Their movements bespeak little more than uneasiness at their present condition, some undefined longings after something better, some dim and flitting visions of a higher good to be obtained. But

these undefined longings, these dim and flitting visions, prove that some of the nobler faculties of man's nature, which have been for ages dormant within him, are waking, and beginning to be conscious of powers long unsuspected.

We have all heard, within a few years, much of "The Workingmen's Party"—that anomaly in the history of parties—a party professedly devoted to the interests of those who are engaged in the physical labour of cultivating the soil, or in some one of the useful arts. We all know that this party has been looked upon with alarm by some, and with contempt by others; but whatever it may be in itself, whatever may be the opinions formed of it, we see, at the bottom of the movements of which it is a result, much to encourage the philanthropist. This party has not been rightly comprehended. Those who see in it only insubordination, a desire to agitate, and the efforts of some demagogues to open, by means of a new party, a path to power which they despaired of attaining by any old one, may be right; but those who see *only* this are wrong. This party is linked with those great movements which are agitating the world,—movements which in France have created a new dynasty, which in England obtained the Reform Bill and threatened to obtain much more, and which are now acquiring in Germany a momentum that will soon bear away everything that would obstruct their progress. It is one of the manifestations of a deep and settled conviction—soon to become general—that there is something wrong in men's social arrangements, that the evils embosomed in society are not inseparable from the social state, and that the workingmen deserve and can attain a higher rank than has ever yet been assigned them. It indicates an unwillingness on their part any longer to submit to the evils they have had to endure, and a determination to spare no pains to remove them. It is this view of the party that makes it animating to the friends of humanity, and which gives importance to its measures.

The party may be taken as a proof of the improved condition of the workingmen of our country. In those countries where the condition of the workingmen is the worst, the fewest efforts are made to meliorate it. There they know not their rights, are not discerning enough to discover the evils they endure, are not bold enough to attempt and scarcely capable of wishing to remove them. There they are peaceable, light-hearted, submitting to every species of tyranny, and receiving the blows of their masters with

patience. But in those countries where their condition improves, where they rise in the scale of society, they become thoughtful, impatient, sensitive to the least neglect, unwilling to brook even the tone of superiority. The ignorant slave who knows not that he has rights makes no efforts to gain them, submits quietly to his condition, and dreams not that he is entitled to a better; but the one who knows that he has rights, that slavery itself though coupled with every luxury is a degradation, a crime against nature, will submit to it not without many a proof of his impatience, and many a struggle to shake it off.

When, therefore, we see a class of our fellow-beings, which long submitted patiently to wrongs of no small magnitude, taking measures to redress itself, we may be assured that it has already advanced. Formerly the workingmen made no complaint; they demanded no reform, dreamed not of attempting one. They knew not that they were created with equal rights; they knew that they had always been degraded, and they supposed, if they supposed anything about it, that it was just that they should be. Now they talk of their rights and form a party to obtain them; speak of their importance to the community, the wrongs they have endured, the justice they desire, and which they are determined to have. And indicates this no advance? Could this be expected from a degraded Russian serf? Is it no advance, to become conscious that they have equal rights, conscious that they have not enjoyed them, and determined to submit to such a state of things no longer? Would the Russian serf ever dream of meddling with the political interests of his country? Would he ever dream of being able to control them? But in our country the workingman, the poorest workingman, grapples with the difficult problems of political science, and is influential in forming a party which not only proposes to protect the especial interests of his class, but to have an important bearing upon the welfare of the whole human family. Is not this an advance? Would the workingmen of our country, had they been suffering the evils endured by the workingmen of some other countries, ever have organized a party like the one we are considering? Certainly not. They would have had no mental power to comprehend it, no leisure to attend to it.

We may, as a general rule, then, take the movements of the people in their own behalf, their efforts to meliorate their condition, as a proof that their condition by some means

or other has already been improved. Those outbreakings of a starving populace witnessed in some countries may be alleged to the contrary; but these outbreakings indicate no desire for a reform in the social state, the most they demand is one in the larder. They indicate no elevation of soul, no fitness for an advanced state of society, no thirst for a higher good, and consequently make nothing against our general position. There is something gratifying to a benevolent spirit in this view of the workingmen's party. It is cheering to contemplate its organization as the result, not of a worse state of society, but of a better — not of greater positive evils endured by the workingmen, but of less. In this case its demands for reform prove that one has already been effected; its exclamations at the depravity of the times prove the depravity lessening, — for it is a great point gained, that depravity excites indignation; its denunciations of the evils of our social arrangements assure us that the greatest of those evils, unconsciousness of them, is removed. If this be correct, call the workingmen's party good or bad, suppose it adapted or not adapted to its avowed ends, its existence is a proof that light has increased, and the standard of virtue has been raised. That those who organized the party took this view of it we do not pretend. They thought the evils of society were increasing, but they thought so only because their eyes had been opened and their vision strengthened. They saw evil where before they had seen nothing, at least nothing bad. It is true that they had before seen the inequality in men's social condition, but they had supposed it a part of the plan of Divine Providence, and that they would be guilty of rebellion against his government, should they question its justice or its necessity. True, they did not exactly comprehend why it should be necessary, nor how it could be just for one man to sow and another reap, one labour and another enjoy, one be a master and another a slave, one the tyrant and another the victim; but those who had an interest in perpetuating old abuses soon relieved them, if at any time this chanced to give them any uneasiness. They were told that all the distinctions which disturbed them, all those evils of which they complained, were inseparable from the social state, and could be avoided only by going back to the condition of the savage. The divisions into classes, of rich and poor, high and low, learned and ignorant, were said to be of the highest utility in promoting social order, in giving to society its just proportions, and in giving occasion for the display of some of

the noblest virtues of which our nature is capable; and this, though wholly unintelligible, was perfectly satisfactory to the poor wretches who could be grateful for the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, while their labour and their poverty made him the rich man. Reasoning like this had for ages satisfied one class with its usurpations, and reconciled the other to its degradation.

We consider the organization of the workingmen's party a virtual rejection of this reasoning. The workingman had heard it, but could no longer be satisfied with it; he had learned enough to perceive its fallacy; he felt that an impartial Father could never have made such distinctions as he saw, a part of his government of his children; and that it was charging him with great unkindness, if not injustice, to pronounce the evils of our condition inevitable. He now saw, or thought he saw, himself and his class poor and neglected, though industrious and useful; while those who neglected him were rich and respected, though idle and useless. He saw that all over the world it was the same, — that those who produced all the wealth, paid all the taxes, bore all the burdens of the community, maintained themselves, besides maintaining all who were not of their number, were the "lower class," the "multitude," the "herd," the "mob," the "many-headed monster," called "the people;" while those who produced nothing, added nothing to the well-being of society, were considered beings of a superior race. "Is this right?" said he in the bitterness of his soul, but with the stern resolve to be answered. "Is this right, that those who are alone the useful members of the community should be oppressed, be trampled upon, be the lower orders; while those who are useless shall be called the great, the higher orders? Here I am a hard-working man, I am honest, I am useful; but my presence commands no respect, my voice no attention, my wit excites no mirth. If I am sick, no one cares; if I am killed, there is little zeal to ferret out my murderer; if I die, none regard it. A rich man, who has obtained his wealth by means which would have sent a poorer man to the penitentiary, is welcome, go where he will; does he speak, all listen; does he joke, all laugh; does he die, all mourn. Is this right?"

We are the historians, not the advocates, of his reasoning. Whether it be correct, or incorrect, is not our present inquiry. We detail it as a proof of his progress. He must have advanced far before he dared arraign the justice of the present

system of things, before he dared put such questions as we have repeated. And this is not all; the time when he put these questions gave them double power to startle. The same words may be repeated at one time with no effect, at another with tremendous power. The old Mysteries arraigned the justice of Providence in terms far surpassing the boldness which is termed impiety in the author of "Cain"; but in them it was treated as a jest. Religion had so strong a hold on men's minds and consciences that nobody believed that anyone could seriously question its truths. In "Cain" the case was different. Passing from one form to another, religion was apparently weak, and every blow, however slight, became a serious affair. The progress of events had produced a similar state of things in reference to what were called the higher and the lower classes. The old aristocratic notions and aristocratic distinctions had received several severe shocks, and from the fifteenth century had been verging to the point where they must be entirely discarded. A war between the past and the future was kindled, and men's minds were agitated, men's hearts were open to a change great and important. This state of things gave to the words of the workingman a new and deeper meaning, permitted them to sink deep into the heart, and to become fruitful in effects. This is a reason why his party, his movements, which in a former age would have and should have excited only ridicule, now become and are to be treated as serious affairs, full of promise to his friends and of consternation to his enemies.

It is also worthy of remark to those who would fully understand this party, that the dissatisfaction of the workingman which led to its organization was not with mere local and temporary evils, but with the whole framework and texture of society as it is. He saw the few in possession of all knowledge and power, that the many were the vassals of the few, and that the few, having the exclusive control of everything, managed everything in accordance with their own interest, in opposition to that of the many. It was inquired by the workingman, "How happens this? How came the few to obtain this control? How do they preserve it? It is," he said, "that we have been and are too confiding. We entrust everything to the few; and this is the reason why they have power over us, and why they come to have an interest in opposition to ours. Were we enlightened, virtuous, capable of governing ourselves, they would not be paid for governing us; should our minds become developed, our hearts duly

cultivated, we might be their equals in knowledge and virtue, and that would destroy their superiority; and hence it is their interest to keep us ignorant, vicious, criminal, and enslaved. To avoid this we must hereafter attend to our own concerns ourselves. What one would have well done one should do one's self; he who will not help himself will find nobody able or willing to help him. We must, therefore, help ourselves and take care of our own interests."

Having come to this point, he had come to the point where it was necessary to act; he must recover the control of his own affairs, and prepare himself to manage them. For this object he organized his party; and hence the workingmen's party, — the meetings, measures, that whole series of movements avowedly for the benefit of the workingmen.

These remarks show the light in which we contemplate this party, and the movements of which it is a result.

O. A. Brownson.

Letters to Unbelievers.

No. II.

UNREASONABLE MODES OF ATTACKING CHRISTIANITY.

[Continued from p. 145.]

V. *Obscurity of the Scriptures.*

1. You all know that the Constitution of the United States is not clear and explicit in all its provisions. The wisest and most honest of our statesmen receive very different impressions from some of its enactments. They spend much time in debating concerning the meaning of the original framers of the instrument. Many commentaries have already been written and published in its explanation. No one will deny these statements.

Suppose a subject of some despotic government should travel through our country. Suppose he should attack our republican institutions in the following manner: "Americans, you boast greatly of your freedom. You magnify the merits of your Constitution. Your legislators are enthusiastic in its defence. But just notice the great obscurity of this boasted charter of your rights. Already several large volumes have been written in explanation of its true meaning. And what is the principal occupation of your public servants on the floor of Congress? Disputing, wrangling, fighting, concerning the different explanations which are given to some of its phrases. Yes; and you pay these legal gentlemen an enormous price for their quarrelsome labours; you pay another large amount for the printing of these long speeches; you then spend much precious time in their perusal; and what do you receive for all this property and time and patience? Nothing valuable. For these different interpretations of the obscure parts of the Constitution and these angry discussions keep you divided into parties, make you unfriendly and unjust towards one another, and thus destroy your peace, your improvement, and your happiness. If I mention your charter of rights, you all unite in declaring it the most perfect human instrument. If I ask you to explain its true meaning in relation to several important subjects of legislation, no two of you will give me the same answers, except so far as you are arranged into opposing parties and adhere to the opinions of your respective leaders. I call upon you, therefore, to avoid all these weighty evils. I exhort you to destroy this obscure and indefinite Constitution, which causes so much waste of time and money and morals and enjoyment. I advise you to appoint a king, who shall be the fountain of all law, who shall stand in the place of both Constitution and Congress, who shall dictate the course for you all to pursue, and in whose family the office shall remain hereditary. In this way you will avoid such a waste of property, time, and happiness."

Should you call this a rational mode of attacking our republican institutions? I suspect you would not hesitate to reply. "Sir, we admit that our wisest and best men differ concerning the true meaning of some of the provisions of our Constitution. We know that several of the number have published large and valuable commentaries in explanation of its contents. We acknowledge that our legislators dispute long and earnestly about the different explana-

tions of some of its enactments. But what does all this prove? The evils you mention are inseparable from written laws. They arise from the unavoidable ambiguity of language. They are of no great consequence. They are trifling, in comparison with the blessings connected with a republican government. And they serve many valuable and important purposes. We, sir, prefer our free institutions, with all their imperfections and attendant consequences, to the rule of a despot, to the tyranny of one frail and capricious and perhaps cruel monster. We have no disposition to change our situation for the one you recommend. We have enjoyed the sweets and blessings of freedom too long to sacrifice them on account of the few accompanying disadvantages. And we can consider your attack upon our Constitution on account of its obscurity in no other light than that of wilful ignorance and gross absurdity."

2. Now let me apply this illustration. The Scriptures are obscure and indefinite in relation to some topics. Christians have disputed about their true meaning for many ages. Many volumes of commentaries have been written in explanation of their obscure portions. Believers are divided into different and opposing sects on account of the different impressions they receive from the sacred writings. These facts are known to all men.

What use do you make of this circumstance in your attacks upon the Bible? You reason precisely like the opposer of republican institutions. The substance of your remarks may be thus expressed: "If we attack the Scriptures, Christians are greatly excited. They pronounce them the only infallible standard of faith and practice. In the mean time their priests are disputing about the true meaning of many portions of their sacred volume. They have also published various commentaries in explanation of obscure passages, until the world is full of the contradictory expositions of the opposing denominations. Thus they make you support them while they quarrel with one another and keep you in contention and bitterness. You would act more wisely to do as we have done; we have nothing to do with writings so obscure and indefinite. We take our own reason as the only guide to truth and duty and happiness. We are therefore saved from all the expenses and controversies and troubles of Christians. We advise you to burn your Bibles and follow Nature. You will then feel happy."

This is then one of your common modes of attacking

Christianity. But is it not as unreasonable to reject the Scriptures for their obscurity as to condemn the Constitution for the same objection? Yes, much more irrational. For our Constitution has been written scarcely more than half a century. It is composed in our vernacular tongue. The hands of those who framed the instrument and voted it into existence are not all cold in death. And still you see how many different meanings are drawn from its provisions. Now the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures were written many hundreds of years since, in languages now dead; and they contain frequent allusions to the then existing manners, customs, disputes, scenery, opinions, and local circumstances. We have them in an imperfect translation, made several generations since, containing many terms now obsolete, and divided into chapters and verses without any regard to the sense or connexion. Is it, therefore, strange that their teachings on some points should be obscure and indefinite? Without a constant miracle the fact could not have been otherwise. But there is enough plain to the lowest capacities to answer all the purposes of a revelation. From their pages we may all learn that we have a perfect Father in heaven, and that he has sent Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world. We can learn that we shall all enjoy another conscious existence beyond the grave, and that we cannot be truly happy either here or hereafter without Christian holiness. We may all learn that our whole duty consists in living a sober, righteous, and godly life in the present world. We need not be at a loss to discover what is right and what is wrong, in any given instance; and if we conscientiously practise the former and shun the latter, we are safe for time and safe for eternity. Is it not, then, infinitely more unreasonable to condemn the Bible on account of its obscurity, than to condemn the Constitution of the United States for the same defect? Let your reason answer.

VI. *Discrepancies in the Scriptures.*

1. You know that several individuals have written the life of Bonaparte. They disagree respecting many traits in his character. But this is trifling, in comparison with their disagreement concerning important facts in his history. In relation to several very prominent events of his life they plainly contradict each others' statements. Those who have read these authors will assent to my assertions.

Suppose I should make use of this circumstance thus: "Brethren, several historians have pretended to give us the life and acts of Napoleon. Their works are filled with contradictions. This is enough to destroy all confidence in their statements. It becomes very doubtful whether any such person ever existed. But admitting he did, which is a matter of very little consequence, you can know nothing of his sayings or doings. Which writer will you believe? They all profess to state truth and nothing but truth. As there are plain contradictions, there surely must be some falsehoods. Both sides of a story cannot be true. It is but reasonable to infer that the whole is fiction and forgery."

Should you call this sound and conclusive reasoning? I think you would reply in these terms: "Sir, we admit your facts, but deny your inferences. The very circumstance that so many lives of Napoleon have been written fully proves his personal existence. The disagreement of the writers in some particulars shows conclusively, that they have not combined together to deceive the world. You are left at liberty to believe the witness you think most credible; while all those facts in which all unite are certainly to be received as well attested truth. Your skepticism on account of the contradictions of the several histories is altogether irrational."

2. Let me apply this illustration. Four individuals have written the life of our Saviour. They were well qualified for the undertaking. They did not perform this important service until several years after his death and resurrection. They are perfectly agreed respecting his character. In relating the various events and actions of his wonderful history, they have fallen into some slight discrepancies. All who have perused the Gospels carefully will understand and credit this statement.

Now what use do you make of these discrepancies in the sacred writings? You pronounce them sufficient to destroy all confidence in the Evangelists. On no other mode of attack do you seem to place so much reliance. Your reasoning on this point may be thus briefly stated: "Christians, you see that the apostles contradict each other. Because they are not agreed in every particular you should regard the whole as forgeries. You should reject the gospel as an imposition. For if the whole be not true, the whole must be false."

Is this conclusion consistent with your reasoning concerning Bonaparte? Is it not as unreasonable to condemn the gospels, on account of some slight discrepancies of the Evangelists, as to reject the whole story of Bonaparte, on account

of the contradictions of his historians? Yes, far more unreasonable. For the very contradictions in the different lives of Napoleon strengthen your confidence in his history. Why should not the case be the same in relation to the Gospels? Nor is this all. Suppose you were placed on a jury to try a citizen accused of murder. Suppose four witnesses should give their testimony in the very same words. Should you not hesitate in believing their statements? Should you not suspect they had plotted together to deceive the court? You certainly would; and I have no doubt you would acquit the supposed criminal merely on this account. But if four witnesses should agree in the main particulars, if they should use different language, if they should disagree in several minor points, you would believe their testimony, you would condemn the accused. You would affirm that these different modes of relating events and these trifling contradictions strengthened their evidence. These would be your feelings and views under the supposed circumstances. Now the Evangelists furnish a parallel case. They testify to the life, conduct, words, death, and resurrection of Jesus. They are perfectly agreed in every point of the least importance. They differ respecting some trifling incidents, some unessential circumstances. Take one instance of the greatest discrepancy. All four give an account of the resurrection of Jesus. They harmoniously testify to the essential fact itself. But in narrating the circumstances connected with this wonderful event they disagree. Some mention more particulars than others. Some relate things which are omitted by others. Some state things which cannot be easily reconciled with other statements. Had not this been the case I should have been utterly astonished. For at the time of the crucifixion they had no real belief in the resurrection. They were wholly discouraged. Their hopes were buried in the sepulchre. They went to the tomb early in the morning, before it was light. They were overwhelmed with surprise. They could scarcely believe their own senses. And when they came to record this event some years afterwards, each one published his own impressions; and hence the slight discrepancies which strengthen their testimony. None of them could be mistaken as to the resurrection itself; for this event produced an entire change of purposes and conduct in all the apostles. Before, they were timid, worldly-minded, unbelieving, and fearful; but afterwards, they became bold, courageous, disinterested, and ready to undergo any trials or persecutions for

the cause of Christ. A firm belief in this fact is all we need; and as to the trifling incidents on which they differ we are not required to have any faith. This is a fair view of the discrepancies found in the Scriptures; they serve to strengthen our confidence in their genuineness and truth. They would naturally produce this effect upon any fair-minded jury on earth. Is it not, then, infinitely more unreasonable to condemn Christianity on account of the slight discrepancies of the sacred writers, than it would be to reject the whole history of Bonaparte on account of the great contradictions of his biographers? I put the question to your conscience.

VII. *False Religions, Counterfeit Miracles, Apocryphal Writings.*

1. You know that counterfeit bank-bills are in circulation. They are made in imitation of the currency of the different States' and United States' banks. Many who have been engaged in making and vending this spurious money have been detected and punished. These are well known facts.

Suppose I should take the following stand in relation to this subject: "Gentlemen, I shall never receive any more paper money. I have lately taken bills on several different banks; and I have since discovered that the whole number are counterfeit. I do not believe there is any good paper money in circulation. I have resolutely determined never to look at another bank-bill. I suspect the directors of our banks are at the bottom of this mischief. They are aiming to sponge the community. I therefore call upon you to follow my example, and we can put an end to all this corruption and iniquity."

Should you pronounce this correct reasoning? You would probably reply: "Sir, you talk very unwisely. The very circumstance of the existence of counterfeit money proves that good bills are in circulation. You have examined but a small proportion of the whole number which are in existence. Your best course, therefore, would be to learn how to distinguish good from bad money, and you will no longer be troubled with counterfeit bills. And to condemn *all* paper money, simply because you have been so unfortunate as to receive *some* counterfeit bills, is truly unreasonable."

2. Let me apply this illustration. There are several religions which claim to be of Divine origin. There have been accounts of miracles, both among the ancient heathens and the modern Catholics. There are several apocryphal writings

relating to the life and religion of Jesus. These facts are known to all men.

Now what use do you make of these facts in your attacks upon Christianity? You reason concerning them in the following manner: "Christians, several religions claim to be Divine revelations. You all admit that the Chinese, the Indian, the Mohammedan are human impositions. We infer that the Jewish and Christian are of the same description. You find an account of miracles among heathen nations, and in every period of the Catholic church. You all acknowledge that these are fictions, and hence we infer that all revelations of miraculous interpositions are falsehoods. There are several gospels and epistles which you all reject as forgeries. We therefore give no credit to any part of your Scriptures."

This is one of your common modes of attacking Christianity. Is it not as unreasonable to condemn all religions, all miracles, all histories of Jesus, on account of some false religions, some pretended miracles, some apocryphal memoirs, as it would be to condemn all paper money, because, through your ignorance, you have for a time taken none but counterfeit bills? Yes, I think you must perceive that the former is much more unreasonable than the latter. For it would require a long time to distinguish good from bad money, and to examine all the bills in circulation. But you might easily learn to distinguish false religions from the one of Divine origin, counterfeit miracles from those which bear the impress of heaven, and forged gospels from those which are genuine and authentic. If you have not the time and learning to read the necessary books in order to settle these questions, you might bring the gospel to the test of personal experiment. You cannot buy the necessaries of life with counterfeit bills, neither can false religion satisfy the wants of your nature. As good money will provide a supply for your bodily appetites, so the gospel will satisfy the cravings of your immortal soul. Regulate your heart and life by her instructions, and you will soon have the most satisfactory evidence of her Divine origin within your own bosom. If you will not pursue this course, let your observation decide this question. Take your map and survey the world. What have other religions done for mankind? Kept them in ignorance, degradation, wretchedness. And what has not Christianity accomplished for the human family? She has civilized the savage, educated the barbarous, raised woman to her rank in society, blessed the unfortunate, and made all who have obeyed her

laws good and happy, as husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbours and citizens. She has given support in sickness, and hope and joy in death. This everyone must admit, who will investigate the subject and be governed by existing and harmonious facts. Is it not, then, infinitely more unreasonable to condemn Christianity on account of false religions, than it would be to condemn all paper money because some bills are counterfeit? I appeal to your common sense and common honesty.

VIII. *Christianity contradicts Experience.*

1. You know there is a class of men called astronomers. They ask us to believe many remarkable statements. They assure us that this earth on which we live is shaped like a ball; that it is twenty-five thousand miles in circumference; that it turns completely round every twenty-four hours; that we who are on its surface travel at the rate of about twenty miles a minute, and that we move round the sun every year. They tell us that the moon is two hundred and forty thousand miles from our globe, and that it is not so very much smaller in size; that it revolves on its axis every twenty-four hours, and that it moves round the earth in twenty-nine days; that it has no light in itself, and that it shines by reflecting the rays of the sun. They affirm that those little shining specks in the heavens are larger than the moon and earth united; that they shine with unborrowed light; that they are suns to other worlds. They declare that our sun is ninety-five millions of miles from the earth, and that it is very much larger; that it has some dark spots on its face, and is still the source of light and heat. These and other stories do they call upon us to believe as established truths.

Suppose I should attack their system in the following manner: "Gentlemen, you ask me to believe many things which are contradicted by the testimony of my senses. I can see that the earth is not round. I can feel that it does not turn over every day. If it did, we should all fall from its surface, and all the water would run out of our wells. I can feel that we do not travel twenty miles a minute; for such rapid flight would take the breath from any man's body. I can see that we are never on the south side of the sun, and consequently we do not move round that luminary. I can also observe that the moon is no bigger than a cart-wheel; that it is bright in itself, for it shines when the sun is absent. I can observe

that the stars are no larger than lamps, and that they cannot be suns. I can notice that our sun is not so large as a common sized kite; that it cannot give light and heat to the whole world; that it does move daily round the earth, and that it has no black spots on its disc. Most of your statements, therefore, are directly contrary to the testimony of my own senses; and all your figuring can never induce me to believe what I know is contradicted by my daily experience."

Should you pronounce this conclusive reasoning? If you possessed much intelligence, you would return an answer similar to the following: "Sir, you are much too hasty in your conclusions. We admit that many astronomical facts contradict the testimony of our senses and are opposed to our daily experience. But our senses often deceive us, and our experience is no standard of scientific truth. These gentlemen have given their attention to the science of astronomy for many years. They are amply qualified to decide concerning its truths. They can have no possible motive to practise deception. They offer the most satisfactory evidence in support of every statement they make. They desire you to examine for yourselves, and decide according to your honest convictions. Everyone who has properly attended to the subject is a believer. True, all astronomers are not agreed in every particular; but you are required to judge for yourselves which theory is most plausible and best supported. And for you to condemn a science which you have never studied, simply because some of its facts are contradicted by your experience, is truly unphilosophical and unreasonable."

2. Let me apply this illustration. A large and learned body of Christians ask you to believe the gospel on satisfactory evidence. We acknowledge a spiritual Father, the Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor of the universe. We believe he raised up Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world. We believe he sent him to bless everyone of you, by turning you from your iniquities. We believe that Jesus laboured, taught, suffered, died, and rose from the dead, as related in the Gospels. We believe that his religion is adapted to our natures and necessities, and that if we imitate his example, imbibe his spirit, and obey his commands, we shall experience daily happiness, be prepared for a joyful death and a glorious immortality. We have carefully examined the evidences which prove the truth of these statements. We think they must satisfy every candid inquirer. We do not ask you to take any thing upon our authority.

How do you treat our friendly invitation? The language of your lips and conduct is something like the following: "We cannot believe your story. Your religion contradicts our experience. You require us to love our enemies, and we know this is impossible. You talk of miracles, and we never saw one. You say a man is answerable for his faith, and we know that our belief does not depend upon our will. You boast of your evidences, but we prefer to be governed by our senses and our reason."

This is one of your common modes of attacking Christianity. Is it not as unreasonable to condemn the gospel, on account of those things which appear at first sight to be contrary to your experience, as it would be to condemn astronomy, because its principal facts are daily contradicted by your senses? Yes, much more unreasonable. For you profess to believe the statements of astronomers. You have never examined a particle of their evidences. You rely wholly on their testimony. And their positions are hourly contradicted by your senses of seeing and feeling, by your inward and outward experience. Now there is nothing in Christianity, when fully understood, which violates the laws of our experience and observation, with the exception of miracles; and these are supported by infinitely better evidence than many truths which you receive without the least hesitation. The gospel commands nothing but what is absolutely necessary for your true happiness in this world; and it forbids nothing which will not prove seriously injurious to your constitution or happiness on earth. If you have never experienced its saving influence upon your hearts and lives, your opinion on this subject is of no value. For we produce hundreds and thousands of the greatest and wisest and best and most useful men, who will unanimously testify that religion is a reality, that they have *felt* its power on their own minds, that it has made them good and happy; and such testimony is not to be set aside by your bare assertions. But if you are not disposed to try the experiment for yourselves, and thus obtain that evidence which cannot be resisted, you may see what the gospel has done for the world. Look into society. You can find those who are daily made better and happier by their religion. You may see many of the number leave the world in great joy. You must admit that that faith produces many valuable results. But this is not all. It is a literal fact, which no honest unbeliever will pretend to deny, that not one in a hundred of your party,

has examined a page of those evidences which have satisfied the greatest and wisest and best men who have ever lived. They may have read more or fewer of the infidel writers; but this is nothing to the purpose. Suppose I should read nothing in relation to astronomy but the attacks of its opposers. Would you call this free inquiry? Those of you who pretend to have looked at the Christian evidences have taken but a very superficial survey. This is evident from your writings on the subject. No, I never knew a man, I never heard of a man, I never read of a man, who had examined the evidences of natural and revealed religion, with honesty and candour and patience, who remained an unbeliever. I do not believe any such individual can be named, among either the dead or the living. But thousands and tens of thousands of skeptics and infidels have been converted to Christianity by a thorough study of its nature and a proper investigation of its evidences. Is it not, then, infinitely more unreasonable to condemn the religion of Jesus, without understanding its nature or evidences, on account of the few particulars which appear to contradict your experience, than it would be to condemn the science of astronomy, without any knowledge of its character or proofs, because its leading facts are contrary to your daily experience and observation? Let your conscience answer.

I have noticed several of your modes of attacking Christianity. Have I not convinced you that they are truly unreasonable, and derogatory to men who boast of being guided by a sound understanding? Would not the same process of reasoning destroy your confidence in everything under heaven? In all my illustrations I have had reference to one or more of your publications. There are a few other instances of your folly which I should consider at large, did my limits permit; but I can now merely expose their weakness by a counter statement.

Some of your leaders have offered a reward of a thousand dollars to anyone who will prove the existence of God, or that such a person as Jesus Christ ever lived on earth. No one has appeared to claim the offered premium. They proclaim this fact as conclusive evidence that no one can establish these positions. And this boasting has some weight with very weak minds. Now I will make an offer. Your city lecturer has published his "Philosophical Creed." These are his words: "I *believe* in the existence

of a universe of suns and planets, among which there is one sun belonging to our planetary system; and that other suns, being more remote, are called stars; but that they are indeed suns to other planetary systems." Now if this man or any other individual of your party will prove, to my satisfaction, that the "*stars are suns to other planetary systems*," I will pay him the sum of one hundred thousand dollars. I do not expect anyone will appear to establish the truth of this position, and at the close of the year I can proclaim that the "Philosophical Creed" of your leader is refuted. This will doubtless satisfy weak minds that the stars are *not* suns to other planetary systems.

Another mode of attacking Christianity is ridicule. Ridicule! If ever a class of men on earth justly exposed themselves to satire, it is those who profess to be "*Free Inquirers*." Free Inquirers indeed! Free *from* what? From any correct knowledge of the Scriptures; from any acquaintance with the evidences of natural and revealed religion; from any correct principles of reasoning; from any decent share of information. They may have read Paine's "Age of Reason"; they may peruse, weekly, "The Investigator." Armed with such vast stores of truth, they strut about the streets, sneering at the belief of the wisest men in the community, thus proclaiming their own folly and delusion by the very name they assume. This is true. This I *know*, this *you* know, this *they* know. And if ever there was a provocative to ridicule, it is the pretensions and the conduct of a large portion of your party.—But I forbear. I am not writing for those who will not read and investigate. I only ask you to examine my remarks upon your modes of reasoning, and be governed in your decisions by the preponderance of evidence.

B. Whitman.

Christianity a Universal Religion.

"The field is the world."

[*Concluded.*]

In a previous article we noticed two characteristics of Christianity as fitting it to become a universal religion,—namely, its adaptation to human nature, and its adaptation to all varieties of external situation. In passing to the third

point proposed to be considered, we remark that man is a progressive being, and needs a religion not only adapted to the elements of his nature and the varieties of his present situation, but to every successive stage of improvement and refinement. We say, then,

III. In the third place, that Christianity is fitted to become a universal religion, inasmuch as it is adapted to every possible degree of intellectual elevation.

The Grecian and Roman states present to us the anomaly of a twofold religion, — one suited, as was imagined, to the wants of the illiterate and vulgar, the other to the tastes of the patricians and philosophers. The latter had outgrown the popular superstitions. Though convinced of their utility they recognised their absurdity, and substituted in their stead a sluggish Divinity of finite intelligence, limited power, and partial providence; and some daring spirits outgrew a belief in this strange and unknown God, and expanded themselves into ignorant, arrogant, boastful atheists. Indeed, in every heathen land which has made any degree of intellectual improvement, a corresponding change or modification of its religion has taken place; and I would appeal to any impartial man, whether friend or foe to Christianity, for the justice of the remark, that the permanence of every other religious system now held by any nation depends upon the permanence of the present state of intellectual and social refinement among that nation, — that science, literature, and the arts, without the preaching of any new faith, would be sufficient essentially to modify, if not to subvert Mahometanism or any existing form of polytheism. I have also apostolic warrant for applying the same remark to the Jewish religion. "The law," says St. Paul, "was our schoolmaster, to bring us to Christ"; and he has written whole epistles to prove that the Jewish law was suited to a low stage of refinement, was designed as an initiatory system for a single people, and was neither designed nor adapted for perpetuity, or for an advanced state of society.

But it is not so with the gospel. Its first disciples were illiterate and unrefined. It pronounced, it conferred, the richest blessings upon them. They found in it instructions commensurate with their capacities, adapted to their wants. They found it, indeed, vast and majestic; but simple and accessible. Hundreds and thousands, as ignorant as they, embraced it in its simplicity, imbibed its genuine spirit, were armed by it to conflict with temptation and persecution, and

became martyrs to its truth. And how many have there been in every age of the church, who, in ignorant simplicity, have through faith in Christ been enabled to lead virtuous, useful, and happy lives, and to die in peace and hope! The gospel, then, is surely fitted for the unenlightened. But how is it with men of refinement and erudition? Let a few bright examples answer the question. Milton soared as it were on an angel's wing, passed the bounds of space, and roamed at large in the world of spirits. Yet he consecrated his noble fancy and his lofty powers to the service of Christ, and deemed the life of Christian faith his duty and his highest privilege. Locke sounded the recesses of the human intellect, surveyed its height and its depth, and drew forth from their lurking-place its hidden energies. But his researches did not raise him above the gospel. They only convinced him more and more fully of its Divine origin and its saving power. Newton discovered the laws which bind the universe together, and laid bare the secret springs of nature's mechanism, and yet he scorned not to sit, an humble, child-like learner, at the feet of Jesus.

But how are we to explain this anomaly? How is it that the same religion can meet the wants and interest the minds of the most and the least enlightened? I would answer that the gospel, like the material universe, unites grandeur and simplicity. By the latter it obtains access even to the infant's mind; by the former it commends itself to the loftiest human intelligence. Its truths may be discerned almost intuitively, and are at the same time unfathomable by any but the Omniscient Mind. Take, for instance, what the gospel informs us with respect to the Divine nature. That God is good and just and wise the simplest understanding can at once comprehend, and can make these attributes the ground of confidence and love. But the proofs upon which they rest, the exhibitions which have been made of them, the inferences deducible from them, might form the study of an eternity. Thus, also, the moral precepts of Christ are so plain that whoever has a soul can receive and obey them; but the gospel-system of ethics, as a whole, the foundation upon which it rests, the standard which it recognises, and the scope and learning of its several portions, would furnish an inexhaustible fund of thought for the loftiest intellect. No mind has yet been too weak to embrace Christ and obey him, nor will be, till one exist from which God effaces his image. No mind has yet outgrown the Christian system, nor can, till a created

mind rivals the Uncreated and fills immensity. Christianity can, then, adapt itself to all the various stages of intellectual progress, and, inasmuch as it can do this, it is fitted to become a universal religion.

But man has the means of making a far nobler progress than that of intellectual power and attainments. The ways of wisdom are indeed ways of pleasantness, and peace and joy follow the steps of the sons of genius. But celestial glory attends the votaries of virtue and holiness. The path of the righteous is encompassed with shining light, which waxes brighter and brighter even to the perfect day. In that path man may make indefinite and unending progress; and there have been and are yet living among us men who have infinitely distanced their brethren in this noble career. This leads us to observe,

IV. Lastly, that Christianity is fitted to become a universal religion, because it is adapted to every stage of moral improvement and elevation.

The moral code of other religions is soon learned and soon exhausted. The most virtuous among the ancient Greeks and Romans confessed the inadequacy of the popular religious systems, and made the rejection of them the first step in their moral progress. They allowed that the fear of the gods might restrain the rabble from sedition, robbery, and murder; but they resorted to philosophy, not to religion, for motives to the practice of the severer virtues. Socrates, the brightest exemplar of moral excellence which the pagan world has ever afforded, was arraigned, and, there is reason to believe, justly, for disbelief in the gods. And what aid do the present religions of the pagan world give in perfecting the moral character of their votaries? Do they not rather retard its growth? Do they not contract the heart, chain down the affections to unworthy objects, and lead men to glory in their shame? While they may, perhaps, make the most abandoned profligates better, do they not cut short the progress of those who have taken the first steps towards amendment?

But this is not the case with Christianity. The man who has wasted his time and talents in the service of sin, and has just now come to himself and begun to cry, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee," can find in the gospel the promise of pardon, sufficient motives to future obedience, ample grounds of trust and hope. The frail disciple who aims to do his duty, yet often finds the allurements

of sin too strong for him, may, if he fix his eye upon the teachings and the example of our Saviour, gradually, yet surely, work out his own entire salvation. The man, who to human appearance has forsaken sin, will still need the instructions of the gospel to enable him to eradicate the lurking iniquity of his heart. Nor is its value destroyed by the entire absence of sin. Our divine Master was sinless; and yet he sustained himself in trial, anguish, and death by the power of the very same truths that he taught to his frail disciples, — by the power of his own religion. A man who has once received Christianity cannot renounce it and be at the same time growing better; nor can one attain or keep, without its aid, any lofty eminence of virtue. No one, who is willing to yield up his heart to its influence, can fail to find it congenial to his wants, friendly to his happiness. There lives not a man too depraved to embrace it; for Christ came to save the *lost*, to call *sinners* to repentance, to undo the *heavy* burden. Nor has there lived nor can there ever live a man too pure, too holy to owe allegiance to it and to derive benefit from it. For who is there that is not bound to keep the two great commandments, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart," and, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself"? Who is there to whom the apostolic precept, "Grow in grace," bears no meaning? Who is there to whom the command, "Be thou perfect even as God is perfect," does not present an immeasurable sphere of duty, an infinitely exalted standard of moral attainments? Perfection is the only limit, constant improvement the great law, of the Christian life; nor can this law cease to be applicable until man has attained that limit, — until a finite being rivals in benevolence and holiness the Infinite Supreme. Christianity is, then, adapted to every possible stage of man's moral progress, and is, therefore, eminently fitted to become a universal religion.

Thus have we enumerated some of the more prominent circumstances which fit Christianity to become a universal religion. And now, reader, let our subject enforce upon you the importance of a personal submission to Christ, reception of his gospel, and obedience to his laws.

1. Is his religion adapted to your nature? Embrace it, then, as a congenial system. Embrace it that you may enjoy this world as not abusing it, that you may derive unalloyed pleasure from your social relations, that you may have a mind

ever active, ever well employed, a heart in constant readiness for every good word and work. Thus will your nature answer the purposes for which it was given you, and that part of it which survives the grave will for ever enjoy in beatific vision the objects of your Christian faith.

2. Is Christianity adapted to every possible situation and circumstance of your life? Is it fitted to be the guardian angel of your home and the solace of your distant sojourn, —to fill up the measure of your joy and to mitigate the poignancy of your sorrow? Embrace it, then; for in a world of doubt, disquietude, and disappointment, you need something which can neither change nor fade, — something over which death has no power, — something by which, at the dissolution of the body, you may lay hold on immortal life.

3. Is Christianity adapted to every stage of intellectual progress and refinement? Let no pride of intellect, then, deter you from becoming its sincere disciple. Remember that it makes you conversant with the noblest objects of thought. Remember, too, that the brightest ornaments and the greatest benefactors of the human race have bowed their laurelled heads at the foot of the cross. Imitate their example. Make yourself strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Thus you will here commence a progress which will never terminate. You will go on forever from knowledge to knowledge, from strength to strength, from glory to glory. God will be your instructor, the immensity of space your sphere of research, eternity your home.

4. Is Christianity adapted to every degree of moral perfection? And would you emulate the virtue of those holy men, who through faith and patience are now enjoying the repose of their Father's house? Choose for your guide the Saviour in whom they trusted, — him who triumphed over infirmity, — who came forth immaculate from temptation, — who by a life of sorely tried but sinless virtue bore testimony to the divine power of his doctrine. Thus you may be formed anew in his image, and in the plenitude of moral power win the victory over every spiritual foe. Thus you may wear a conqueror's wreath, and share your Redeemer's throne and his joy forever.

5. Finally, is Christianity fitted to gain a universal ascendancy? Let us, then, not only embrace it ourselves, but make the diffusion of its doctrines and its spirit the object of our untiring effort. God has committed the work of evangelizing the world to human charity. It is in man's power to

hasten or delay its consummation. Warfare, violence, and bloodshed yet retard the approach of the Prince of Peace. The superstition and iniquity everywhere prevalent give us reason to fear that the period of his universal supremacy is yet far distant. But God has pledged his word that all men shall be ultimately led to know, love, and obey the truth. He has promised that he will one day unite all the kingdoms of the world into one vast kingdom, of which righteousness shall be the law and Christ the sovereign. The eye of faith even now beholds the dawn of that day. The icebergs of the Arctic Ocean and the coral reefs of the Pacific have already echoed the notes of the Redeemer's birth-song. In the distant islands of the south the heralds of salvation are at this moment leading the devotions of thousands of new-born Christians; and voices, that ten years ago were strangers to all music but the cannibal's hoarse war-cry, are now swelling the triumphant melody of an Easter anthem. The sun of righteousness, long eclipsed, has burst forth in his splendor, and superstition and sin are flitting from before his beams like the mist of the morning. His light will no more withdraw itself; but will wax brighter and brighter, till it ushers in the full effulgence of that perfect day when

> "One song employs all nations; and all cry,
> 'Worthy the Lamb, for he was slain for us!'
> The dwellers in the vales and on the rocks
> Shout to each other, and the mountain-tops
> From distant mountains catch the flying joy,
> Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
> Earth rolls the rapturous hosanna round."

Bright era of prophetic vision, hasten! Hasten, ye days of light and glory! Oh let us be faithful to our cause and to our Master; and then, though God call us home before his work be completed, our ransomed spirits may return hither, to behold the united worship of the whole human family, and to catch the hymn-note of their praise.

A. P. Peabody.

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

Hints on the Portable Evidence of Christianity, by JOSEPH JOHN GURNEY. *To which is prefixed an Introductory Essay by* F. WAYLAND, *President of Brown University.* Boston, James Loring, 1833. pp. 220.

We hope that the influence of Dr. Wayland's name will not give this book an extensive circulation. We can hardly conjecture why a man of his habits of thought should have been *particularly* anxious that the book should be reprinted in this country. It is but ill adapted, we think, to satisfy the unbeliever or to confirm the faith of the Christian. With many good thoughts and some excellent hints, it wants, in our judgment, method and point, and contains many fanciful analogies, unsound statements, and illogical inferences. We do not say this because the arguments of the book rest mainly on doctrines with which we have no sympathy; for it is, of course, the duty of every man to defend Christianity according to his own views of its character. We do not object that any writer, if he can, should show that there is no inconsistency between the doctrine of the Trinity and the teachings of nature in regard to the Unity of God, nor that the notion of man's native depravity is confirmed by all our observations of his nature. Our remarks on Mr. Gurney's book have another origin. We will give one or two specimens of the kind of reasoning which occurs in several parts of the work.

After telling us that Jesus Christ existed with the Father in heaven before his birth, that he is the Son of God, created all things, was in the form of God, and, in fine, was Jehovah; that he was clothed with a human body and a human soul, and made an atonement for our sins; the writer says, "In adducing this account as an internal evidence of the inspiration of its authors, we may, in the first place, notice its *originality.* Nothing can be more novel and extraordinary," &c. p. 72. According to this reasoning the Principia of Newton was divinely inspired, and the wildest dreams and the most extravagant fictions ever invented by man may be a revelation from God. The truth is, the originality of any doctrine is a proof of its having been supernaturally revealed, only when it is of such a character that, under the existing circumstances, it could not have been discovered by human sagacity. This consideration Mr. Gurney has neglected.

Again, says Mr. Gurney, in language to us unintelligible, "Be-

hold, then, the goodly order of truth. The Son is *of* the Father, the only begotten of God. The Holy Spirit is the Father's and the Son's. The Father *sends* the Son. The Father and the Son *send* the Holy Spirit." * And having told us that these three are "essentially and eternally *one*," he remarks, "Yet that doctrine is *beyond* reason — far out of the reach of our intellectual powers; and this is the very ground on which we hail it as another internal evidence of the divine origin of the Holy Scripture." pp. 78 – 80. Now we might naturally expect to find in a revelation from God some things beyond our comprehension; but how the incomprehensibleness of a doctrine — and that a fundamental and the most prominent doctrine of a revelation — is in itself an evidence of its divine origin it is not easy to determine.

As an offset to our strictures, we should not forget to mention the chapters on "A Future Life" and "The Moral Government of God," the latter of which is particularly good.

The title of the book is derived from an expression which Dr. Chalmers used "in a social evening's conversation" with the author, and refers to that part of the internal evidence of Christianity which may be drawn from the adaptation of its doctrines to the spiritual wants of man — evidence which every devout believer "may carry about with him" at all times. The idea is a good one, but Mr. Gurney has not confined himself very closely to his text.

The Introductory Essay by Dr. Wayland is very sensible and comprehensive, and is characterized by his usually clear and forcible language; but we thought we observed, occasionally, an unsound statement.

J. Q. Day.

The Doctrine of Divine Efficiency, defended against certain Modern Speculations. By Edward D. Griffin, D. D.

Another attack upon the New-Haven Theology! Dr. Griffin comes forth with a duodecimo volume of more than two hundred pages. This work is divided into ten chapters, with the following titles: — Dr. Fitch's Theory; Dr. Taylor's Theory; Notice of two other Writers; Meaning and Origin of Corrupt Nature; Divine Efficiency; Importance and Instrumentality of Truth; Scripture Testimony to Divine Efficiency; Sinless Creatures dependent for Holiness; God's Power to prevent Sin; Alleged Dominion of Motives a Distinct Theory. We have endeavoured

* The Italics are Mr. Gurney's.

to peruse these pages in the spirit of candour. We have found them exceedingly dry and uninteresting. We consider our labour as worse than lost, and our time worse than wasted. We have discovered some truths, some errors, and a great deal of mysticism and unintelligible jargon. We think those who purchase the book will regard their money as squandered. We have no expectation that the New-Haven professors will condescend to answer the publication. They must surely have better employment. If Edward D. Griffin had not been made a doctor of divinity and placed at the head of one of our collegiate institutions, we should feel disposed to pronounce this production of his mind very deficient in literary and metaphysical and theological merit.

B. Whitman.

The Literary and Theological Review, No. I. March, 1834. Conducted by Leonard Woods, Jr. New York.

The Literary and Theological Review is to appear quarterly. The price is three dollars per annum. The first number contains one hundred and sixty-four pages. The typographical execution is neat and attractive. There are nine articles on the following subjects, besides two literary notices: — Introductory Article, by the Editor; Letter to the Editor, by Heman Humphrey, D. D.; God without Passions, by John Woodbridge, D. D.; Review of Anti-Slavery publications, and Defence of the Colonization Society, by Theodore Frelinghuysen, Esq.; Mental Philosophy, No. I. by Leonard Woods, D. D.; Economy of Christian Missions, as developed in the Apostolic Age, by Rev. Horatio Bardwell; Christian Sanctification, by Gardiner Spring, D. D.; Theology and Natural Science, translated from the German by the Editor; Review of Olshausen's Commentary on the New Testament, by the Editor. This periodical is doubtless designed to prevent the spread of New-Haven Theology, by furnishing to the community a work, cheaper, more interesting, more spirited, more Orthodox than the Christian Spectator. The Editor has secured able writers, and we consider the publication the very best now issued from any branch of the Orthodox church in America, although we prefer the religious views of the New-Haven Quarterly.

B. Whitman.

CORRESPONDENCE AND INTELLIGENCE.

A LETTER FROM REV. ADIN BALLOU, OF MENDON, IN REPLY TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS BY THE EDITOR, RELATIVE TO THE ORIGIN, PRESENT CONDITION, AND PROSPECTS OF THE SECT OF RESTORATIONISTS.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Your questions are before me. I receive them as an additional evidence of your long-cherished desire for a more friendly understanding between the Unitarians and the Restorationists. I shall be happy to contribute anything which may be calculated to facilitate the accomplishment of that desirable object, and therefore cheerfully respond to your several interrogatories.

1. "When did the Restorationists separate from the Universalists?" — *Ans.* Individual separations have been taking place for several years; but the most formal and decisive act of this kind transpired at Mendon, August, 1831. A convention of ministers and delegates then unanimously resolved to refrain from all further ecclesiastical connexion with the denomination of Universalists, and declared themselves an independent religious community, under the name of *Restorationists.*

2. "Why did you separate?" — *Ans.* That we might maintain what we believed to be a sounder faith, a purer religious practice, and a more perfect liberty of conscience. With all the eminent advocates of universal salvation, from Origen to Winchester, we regarded the doctrine of a future righteous retribution as a fundamental article of the Christian religion. The Universalists had generally abandoned this doctrine, as a worthless "*relic of heathenism.*" That abandonment had been accompanied by a strange and sweeping process of Scripture exposition, which violated the just rules of *exegesis*, and drew after it a concatenation of theological, polemical, and metaphysical productions, in our opinion essentially injurious to the progress of pure and rational Christianity. While we were obliged to regard this train of novel, ever-changing divinity an uncouth medley of truth and error, reason and absurdity, Christianity and skepticism, its authors held it up to admiration as the deep-found wealth of mines, impenetrable to the wisdom of former times, and explorable only by intellects whose profound research anticipated the discoveries of future generations. With a darling fondness for their system, they identified its honor with their own personal respectability, and regarded all who suspected its soundness as inimical to their individual happiness. Hence every attempt to controvert and correct their dogmas, instead of being met by friendly argument, was denounced as the work of an *enemy*, and its unlucky author was effectually silenced by a prejudice which refused him even a hearing. Meantime the new theology enthroned itself in the minds of the laity as the orthodoxy of the order, and demanded universal homage. The majority seemed to forget that the ascendant *ism* was a creature of their own times. The sickly remnant of an obsolete school were daily admonished by the progress of things to keep the peace; and if their unsealed eyes could not see that death was the end of guilt and misery to all mankind, to take care, at least, to avoid an exposure of their weakness. The revolution became irresistible, and he was, at best, a knave or a fool who dared to propose a counter reform.

Nor did it confine itself to doctrinal theories; it was a revolution of

feeling as well as of opinion. The strait gate and narrow way of practical Christianity was enlarged to a more commodious width, and it became persecution to represent that any believers in the *true doctrine*, who preserved a tolerable respect for the ordinary proprieties of civilized life, were deficient in Christian holiness. An essential feature of their religious duty was to shun and denounce all outward indications of sanctity, to expose the trickeries of hypocrisy, the fanaticism of superstition, and the bigotry of self-righteousness. The clergy laboured zealously to prove that all men will be saved, that there will be no punishment after death, that all the threatenings of Scripture apply to the present life, and that *priestcraft* is the mainspring of all religions except their own. The people were called upon to hear, believe, echo, and pay for these lessons of wisdom. All else took thought for itself.

Upon such a state of things we looked with disgust and alarm. The doctrine of universal salvation, as maintained by the wise and good of former ages, — a doctrine which reigned over our understandings and affections, — obscured, perverted, disgraced by its pretended disciples, seemed ready to perish under the rubbish of error and corruption. To us Universalism appeared like a ship on the verge of a whirlpool, whose crew refused to be alarmed, and from whose inevitable destruction the few passengers who saw their peril could escape only by throwing themselves ashore with their lives in their hands. We chose this alternative, and rejoice in our safe deliverance.

3. "Is it probable you will ever reünite with them?" — *Ans.* It is utterly improbable. They must first part with several capital errors, lay aside their anti-religious spirit, set a good example of self-correction, become more just to the motives of their opposers, and practise more of their theoretic love. When this shall have taken place they will be a new people. Till then we must leave them to the consequences of their own chosen conduct. If we reprove them, they account us enemies; if we justify them, we are self-condemned; if we go silently with them, we shall be partakers of their evil; but if we follow the dictates of our own consciences, we shall walk in safety.

4. "How many preachers have you in the United States?" — *Ans.* About twenty who may be considered as supporting our cause on separate ground. There are a few others yet remaining, more or less subservient to Universalist policy, who, we hope, may be induced hereafter to throw their influence into our scale, but upon whom we make no dependence in the estimation of present strength.

5. "What periodicals and books are circulated among your people?" — *Ans.* The only Restorationist periodical is a weekly religious newspaper, published in Mendon under my direction, called "The Independent Messenger." Besides a few books, sermons, and pamphlets, recently published, our people read the works of English Unitarians, of Winchester, Murray, Chauncy, and the older defenders of their peculiar doctrine.

6. "Do your preachers dwell continually on the doctrine of final restoration?" — *Ans.* They are necessarily explicit in the avowal of their faith on this point, but endeavour, mainly, to illustrate and enforce its moral influence by a practical application of first principles to human improvement, rather than to establish abstractly any mere doctrinal conclusion. They are becoming more and more convinced that no theoretical positions are valuable in religion which cannot be employed in the great work of restoring sinners immediately to holiness. There is, however, much room for further improvement in our methods of ministerial instruction, which I trust we shall not be the last to perceive and feel.

7. "Do they insist on the certainty of a future righteous retribution?" — *Ans.* On this, as on the former topic, they are unequivocal and distinct. It is a natural consequence of their particular attention to this subject in their separation from the Universalists, that they do not suffer themselves to lose sight of its importance. That they may become more

efficient and happy in its enforcement I have no doubt. They will strive for the attainment of greater excellence in the inculcation of this fundamental truth.

8. "Do you consider your cause to be on the increase?"—*Ans.* We do. Although compelled to stem a subtle and implacable opposition from our *ci-devant* friends, and to encounter the prejudices of all denominations of Christians around us, our original handful has doubled, and cheering prospects encourage us to renewed exertions. We regard our cause, though yet in its infancy, as permanently established, and look forward with confidence to its future influence in the religious world.

9. "Are there many in other denominations who embrace your distinguishing tenet?" *Ans.* We have reason to believe that the number of avowed Restorationists associated with us is extremely insignificant, in comparison with the thousands intermingled with other sects. Besides multitudes in England, France, and Germany, including some of the most learned Protestants of the age, there are more or less in almost every Christian congregation throughout the United States. The people called Dunkers, in the middle and western states, inherit this faith from their fathers. Among the Baptists of the west, the Friends sometimes called Hicksites, and your own denomination, we have numerous brethren. While the more learned are embracing our faith on the enlightened grounds of critical investigation, many of the unlearned, distinguished for their holy lives, are insensibly advancing to a conviction of its truth through the growth of a benevolence in their hearts which will be satisfied with nothing else. We believe, indeed, that enlightened religious sentiment, in all denominations, is gradually tending towards a rejection of the doctrine of endless misery, and the adoption of a hope that in the ages of eternity the Infinite Father will bring all rational intelligences to a state of holiness and bliss.

10. "What rules of ministerial intercourse do you observe?"—*Ans.* We maintain a fraternal intercourse with one another, by means of clerical conferences and pulpit exchanges. We also exchange cheerfully with ministers of other denominations who are disposed to do so on reciprocal terms, provided we regard them as directing their labours to the great end of persuading men to a life of righteousness.

11. "If a party of Restorationists in a Unitarian parish should desire to establish a separate meeting, and invite your ministers to aid their enterprise by occasional preaching, what course should you pursue?"—*Ans.* We should govern ourselves according to circumstances. If the Unitarian clergyman was on exchanging terms, or willing to be on such terms with us, we should deem it our duty to discourage our friends from separation, and to use our influence in preserving the union of the parish. If, however, the clergyman stood aloof, and refused to cultivate a friendly intercourse, we should feel justified in encouraging a separate meeting, by preaching to our brethren whenever convenient.

12. "Do those of you who are settled over old Congregational churches consider yourselves entitled to a seat in our Convention?"—*Ans.* We do. For besides being strictly Congregational in our mode of church government, those of us settled over established Congregational churches believe ourselves to have been introduced to all the privileges of the religious connexion. Nevertheless, we should be reluctant to press our claim to a seat in your convention, without at least some indications of welcome from a respectable portion of its members.

13. "In what respects do you differ from Unitarians?"—*Ans.* We are far less numerous, less popular, and less learned. None of us regard Jesus Christ as less than an inconceivably exalted, super-angelic being, preëxistent in glory with the supreme Father before the creation of man; and a very few of our number are what may be called Sabellian Trinitarians. Some of us think that a portion of the Unitarians have gone too far in their theological speculations, that their preaching is too scholastic, refined, and frigid, and that some are too reserved on the question of man's final

destiny. These are the principal respects in which there is any perceptible difference of views and feelings. Probably individuals and portions of the Unitarian denomination have as great and important differences among themselves. Concerning the parental character of God we agree entirely with Unitarians; priding ourselves, however, in what perhaps is a vain imagination, that our system of faith, as a whole, is more accordant with this fundamental article of Christianity. Concerning the divine Unity; the character, offices, and atonement of Christ, we coincide with the well known views of your Dr. Worcester. Concerning the doctrines of depravity, regeneration, &c., we concur at least as harmoniously with your authors as they do with one another. There being entire freedom of inquiry and opinion on all points, it would be singular if individuals of both classes should not differ in many of their less essential speculations.

14. "On what terms would the Restorationists be disposed to unite with the Unitarians." — *Ans.* On the broad level of Christian love, liberty, equality, and reciprocity. As these are the only honorable and just terms of union between professed Christians, so, it is believed, they constitute the only basis of a happy and lasting fellowship. We Restorationists could bring no offering to the Unitarians worth accepting but brotherly love. Besides this they would demand nothing in return. They have laboured hard and suffered much for the attainment of liberty to think, believe, and speak independently. This liberty no consideration on earth will induce them to surrender. The same liberty they accord uninfringed to all their fellow-Christians. Names must be left to regulate themselves; all individual, congregational, ecclesiastical, and denominational rights, usages, privileges, and peculiarities must remain undisturbed by either party; and the gentle cement of a free Christian intercourse relied upon to blend the two classes into a homogeneous fraternity. On such terms as these the Restorationists are ready and willing to enter into a cordial union with the Unitarians; and if not deceived in the character of the Unitarians, we are confident that these are the only terms which that enlightened people would approve.

Permit me, then, my dear sir, to conclude this protracted answer to your inquiries with the expression of an earnest hope that our mutual good wishes for the extension and perfection of fellowship between our respective classes of brethren may at no distant period find gratification in the realization of their object. Fraternally yours,

ADIN BALLOU.

Mendon, February, 1834.

THE SALEM CONTROVERSY.

A Letter to the Editor, dated Salem, Mass., March 12, 1834.

DEAR SIR,

I will endeavour to reply, as briefly as possible, to your inquiries concerning the discussion which has been going on for some months in the Salem Gazette.

The controversy was occasioned by an exceedingly scurrilous attack upon the liberal principles of Christianity, and the literary and religious character of those who support them, by the Rev. Mr. Cheever, in a public oration, on the fourth of last July.

The day and the occasion — hallowed to freedom of conscience and action — gave double aggravation to the odious and persecuting spirit of the address. The audience was numerous, embracing many of the abused individuals, of both sexes. Much the larger part were filled with indignation at the vulgar malignity of the attack; the respectable society, es-

pecially, who had loaned their meeting-house for the occasion, felt that their kindness had been greatly misused.

But had the performance been suffered to expire with the day, the indignation which it aroused would not have survived it. The dissenters fr m Calvinism have learned on most occasions, when smitten on the one cheek by that fierce and gloomy superstition, to turn the other also to the smiter. The person who had assailed them at this time, it was well known, habitually denounced them in his own pulpit, in the grossest terms. It was commonly understood that he aspired to be the leader of a sort of "Mountain" party, which, like that which bore the name in the first French revolution, by its vehement denunciation was expected to overawe and subdue the more moderate portion of the great Orthodox sect, and carry dismay into the hearts of all others. With this grand project, however, the Unitarians of Salem felt no call to interfere, while its developement was confined to the pulpit of the Howard-Street Church. They had been long accustomed to sit under their own vine and fig-tree without molestation, strong in conscious truth, respecting and loving their neighbours according to their deserts, and believing the good will to be generally reciprocated.

This confidence was not destroyed even when the libel upon their good name was given to the public in print. The performance was criticised with some sharpness in the Salem Gazette, and there, it is probable, the matter would have ended, and the address have sunk into its deserved oblivion; but some adventurous partisan entered the field in its defence, and endeavoured to compromise the whole Orthodox party to sustain it.

This position was taken with so much confidence that it was feared there might be too much ground for it. A writer in the same paper, therefore, universally understood to be the Rev. Mr. Upham, now came forward to show to our Orthodox brethren on what a broken reed they were leaning, in the person of George B. Cheever.

Mr. Cheever's pretensions to distinction, it was seen, were founded on an assumed superiority to his brethren in literary acquirements. To show the futility of this assumption was therefore the duty undertaken by Mr. Upham, and never was a task of that delicate and difficult nature more triumphantly performed.

It is impossible, within the brief compass of a familiar letter, to answer your question, "What subjects were introduced into the debate?" It comprehended almost the whole range of English theological literature, and brought to light stores of precious gems which had been long hidden from the common view. The great names which have received grace and dignity from Liberal Christianity were vindicated from the aspersions cast upon them by ignorance and intolerance, and the principles of the gospel displayed in a manner to win all hearts. "Ralph Cudworth," as he flippantly called him, was particularly relied upon by Mr. Cheever to sustain his assertion of the degrading character of Unitarianism; but the authority of that great man was shown to be directly against him. His writings were adduced at length, and in most eloquent passages, in favour of Unitarianism, and in the strongest conceivable language against the spirit of Calvinism.

Mr. Cheever soon found that this raking fire was cutting him all to pieces. He therefore attempted to escape under the smoke of another broadside of abuse against Unitarianism and Unitarians in general. The opportunity was promptly seized by Mr. Upham, who, in a long series of articles, distinguished for their learning, critical acumen, and liberality, and enlivened by wit and good temper, vindicated Unitarianism from the slanderous imputations which had been cast upon it in the course of the controversy. The feelings of our Orthodox brethren, however, were studiously respected throughout, and all irritating expressions carefully avoided. This conciliatory course was adopted with great justice and propriety, since it had plainly come out, early in the discussion, that the champions of Mr.

Cheever in the Gazette had spoken altogether without authority, in pretending that the whole Orthodox party were ready to support him in his Saul-of-Tarsus course.

The good influence of this discussion, I think, is already to be perceived, in an increased degree of liberality of feeling amongst a large proportion of our Orthodox friends. The excitement of a warm discussion, carried on in the columns of a political and commercial newspaper which circulates amongst all descriptions of people, has led many to read and ponder facts and arguments which have always been studiously withheld or misrepresented by their spiritual guides. They see that the sentiments of their friends and neighbours have been maligned, their writings garbled and falsified, and their characters traduced. And the singular fact cannot but be noticed by everyone who has means of observation in our community, that, after a controversy which was personal and long continued and closely maintained, on subjects so interesting and exciting as those which have been discussed, a degree of good feeling exists between the denominations more immediately interested greater than has been known at any former period. The cause of charity and mutual respect among Christians never flourished more in Salem than at this moment.

Mr. Cheever is still continuing to write; but he can no longer produce any effect. His fraudulent method of quoting is so well known that no one places the least confidence in him. The controversy has passed its climacteric, and it is understood that Mr. Upham will not feel called upon to do more than take a brief notice of the pieces now in the course of publication by Mr. Cheever. All that has been written by Mr. Upham has been published in a pamphlet form. Mr. Cheever has published, in that way, only one series of his communications, and they were so much altered that the pamphlet is of no service whatever in illustrating the course of the controversy, as it occurred in the Gazette. The friends of Unitarianism and of Christian truth will find in Mr. Upham's pamphlets, besides much excellent original matter, a great variety of extracts from the best writers in the language, particularly Channing and Cudworth, John Howe, Dr. Chalmers, and Robert Hall. These extracts exhibit the great truths and principles of religion and charity, in as interesting, striking, and impressive a form, perhaps, as can anywhere be found.

Yours, &c., ———

THE DUTY OF CLERGYMEN IN RELATION TO THE TEMPERANCE REFORM.

A Letter from Rev. H. Hildreth.

Dear Friend,

As you have requested of me some thoughts on the duties of ministers in relation to the Temperance Reform, I avail myself of a little leisure to comply with your wishes, though my communication will of necessity be very imperfect.

All persons allow that very great responsibility rests with ministers in relation to the moral influence they exert upon society; but for scarcely anything, in my view, are they more responsible than for what they do and for what they leave undone with respect to what is called the Temperance Reformation.

I suppose I may say, without fear of contradiction, that every minister of religion ought to set such a personal example with respect to the use of ardent spirits as all his people can undertake with perfect safety to follow. If so, then he ought himself to adopt and practice the doctrine of entire abstinence. It is of little, if any, practical use, so far as his people are concerned, to preach temperance, while he himself is in the habit of using ardent spirit as drink, or of providing it for others. He may be

what used to be called a very temperate man; still, if he uses any ardent spirit at all as a drink, he sets an example which he knows perfectly well, or ought to know, that his people cannot follow or undertake to follow, without serious peril to health, morals, and life. No person has ever begun to drink ardent spirit with the design of becoming intemperate; but thousands who began with the moderate or temperate use have fallen into habits of intemperance and drunkenness. The temperate use always has been, and, so long as it continues in the community, always will be, introductory to the intemperate use. If a minister sets before his people the example of taking "insidious poison," he not only is in peril himself, but he sets an example which will bring all others into peril who undertake to follow it. Ministers, therefore, ought themselves to abstain wholly from the use of ardent spirit as drink.

But ministers ought not only to set a perfectly safe example in relation to the *use* of ardent spirit; they ought also to *instruct* their people often, plainly, fully, and affectionately concerning their duties in this matter. A minister's teaching ought clearly to be adapted to the moral wants of his people; and if he find, as almost every minister does find, that a great share of the vice, as well as of the poverty and suffering, of his people, is notoriously connected with the use of an article as drink, which experience has shewn to be morally and physically poisonous to human beings, he ought to shew them not only the peril, but the sin of continuing to use it. He ought faithfully to *preach*, as well as to *practise*, the doctrine of entire abstinence from ardent spirit as drink.

It is no sufficient reply to this statement to say that many ministers find it very difficult to preach on the subject of drinking ardent spirit, without seeming to be personal, and giving offence to a portion, and perhaps a very respectable portion, of their hearers. The difficulty of preaching without giving offence does not destroy nor even diminish the duty. The greater the difficulty, the greater the need; and the greater the need, the more imperious the duty. No person can preach upon any popular vice, or popular custom leading to vice, without preaching what is capable of being considered as personal. If he preach against profaneness of speech, he is pretty sure of preaching to some who are profane; if against dishonesty in dealing, to some who are dishonest. But the more hearers of these descriptions there are, and the more influential they are, the more need there is that the vices they practise should be faithfully exposed. And if the full half of a minister's congregation is made up of very sober and respectable moderate drinkers of ardent spirit, he ought not for that reason to omit giving in his testimony against the habit of drinking it; but *for that very reason* he ought to teach, exhort, and warn, with all long-suffering and doctrine. And I will add, if a minister cannot preach to his own people on the subject of using ardent spirit as drink, or on any other evil and injurious practice, without exciting the spirit of wrath and clamour, it is commonly his own fault. It is commonly more owing to his own want of speaking the truth in love than to the unteachable state of his people.

But ought ministers not only to abstain from all use of ardent spirit themselves and teach their people to abstain, but ought they, moreover, in all cases, to take a decided and active part in the *temperance cause?* I say, Yes. For if the cause is intimately connected, as everyone who opens his eyes may see it is, with the intellectual, social, moral, and religious welfare of their fellow-men, how can they be justified in neglecting to act in it, merely because some of their people take ardent spirit or are engaged in the sale of it? Some ministers, I am afraid, are deterred from taking part in the temperance measures of the day, for fear they shall cause divisions among their people. They hardly dare to speak, much less to act boldly and decidedly, because, as they think, "It wont do." Some of their people will take offence. Some of their most respectable people will not only refuse to join a temperance society, but will be greatly disgusted, if such a society is formed. From such considerations as

these, either real or supposed, some ministers are still looking coldly on, while their brethren are at work. I am grieved that it is so. I am grieved for the situation of the minister, and for the situation of his people; for the minister, because I am morally certain this fear of man is bringing a snare, that will prove hurtful, if not fatal, to his ministry; for his people, because they are not provided with a shepherd, who, like the "Good Shepherd," "goeth before his sheep."

If a religious society cannot be kept together and the minister supported, unless he refuse, and persist in refusing, to take part in the great work of charity and mercy which is now being achieved by the friends to the temperance cause, it can hardly be considered a public misfortune to have such a society dissolved. Great and salutary changes have been effected already by the friends of this cause, as all candid persons see and acknowledge. Why, then, should any minister of the gospel of love and mercy permit the imperious needs, the wrong habits, and wrong opinions of his own beloved people to act as reasons for his doing little or nothing, when, in fact, they supply the strongest reasons for doing all in his power toward removing the evils and perils which always have attended and always will attend the custom of using distilled spirit as drink?

Yours, &c., H. Hildreth.

EDITOR'S NOTICE.

The patrons of The Unitarian were informed some months since that, in consequence of the death of Dr. Parker, late of Portsmouth, N. H., his colleague, Mr. Peabody, was under the necessity of resigning his contemplated connexion with this work, as one of the editors, although not as a contributor. Since the issuing of the last number other changes have been determined upon. Mr. Jason Whitman has been elected General Agent of the American Unitarian Association, and enters upon the duties of his office immediately. He, also, is therefore obliged to withdraw from his editorial connexion with this work. And although, in consequence, we cannot have from him those articles on education and doctrinal theology which we expected, yet he will be able to furnish us with information which we could derive from no other source. Mr. Nichols, who has been the acting editor for the three first numbers, feels obliged to resign this duty, on account of other necessary engagements. I have, therefore, consented to be the acting and responsible editor of The Unitarian. I wish all communications and exchange papers directed to me at this place; and all letters relating to the pecuniary affairs of the work to the publishers in Cambridge. I shall endeavour to make such a work as will please, instruct, improve the *people*. I shall not aim to meet the wants of the literary any farther than this can be done by plain, simple, direct, pungent articles. Wishing you the blessing of God, I subscribe myself your friend,

Bernard Whitman.

Waltham, April 1, 1834.